

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05
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O R 291050Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 753

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 5544

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ID

SUBJECT: THE 1977 ELECTION CAMPAIGN: A NET PLUS, WITH RESERVATIONS

1. SUMMARY: THE NEW ORDER POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS PERFORMED
REASONABLY WELL IN THE SECOND ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF ITS SHORT
HISTORY. THE 1977 CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN BETTER RUN AND LESS
VIOLENT THAN ITS 1971 PREDECESSOR. THE OPPOSITION
PARTIES, DESPITE SOME REPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT TACTICS, APPEAR
TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN FAIR LATITUDE FOR THEIR CAMPAIGN. TWO
ISSUES HAVE, HOWEVER, MARRED THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND COULD
SPELL TROUBLE AFTER THE VOTE COUNT. BOTH THE GOVERNMENT
VEHICLE GOLONGAN KARYA (GOLKAR) AND THE OPPOSITION, MOSLEM-
BASED DEVELOPMENT UNION PARTY (PPP) HAVE MADE RELIGION A MAJOR
ISSUE IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND THE VOLATILE EMOTIONS WHICH HAVE
BEEN STIRRED UP HAVE NOT YET SUBSIDED. BITTER WRANGLING
OVER PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING THE ELECTION RETURNS HAVE
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DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS FURTHER HEATED THE POLITICAL
ATMOSPHERE AND LED BOTH THE PPP AND THE NATIONALIST- CHRISTIAN
INDONESIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDI) TO QUESTION SERIOUSLY THE
GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO AN ACCURATE VOTE COUNT.
END SUMMARY.

2. IN THREE DAYS, INDONESIANS WILL VOTE, FOR THE THIRD

TIME IN THEIR NATIONAL HISTORY, FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (DEWAN PERWAKILAN RAKYAT, DPR). CONSIDERING INDONESIA'S RELATIVE INEXPERIENCE IN CONDUCTING ELECTIONS, AND COMPARED TO THE ONLY OTHER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION UNDER THE NEW ORDER (1971), THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH CONSIDERABLE FINESSE. WHILE GOVERNMENT/GOLKAR REPRESSION HAS OCCURRED, AND WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN SPORADIC INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE - APPARENTLY INCLUDING SOME KILLINGS - THE CAMPAIGN GENERALLY APPEARED RELATIVELY ORDERLY, WELL-RUN AND SUCCESSFUL.

3. THE MOST IMPRESSIVE ASPECT OF THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN THE ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT, IN THE ABSENCE OF OPPRESSIVELY OBVIOUS AND HEAVY-HANDED SECURITY OPERATIONS, TO MAINTAIN NEARLY ABSOLUTE PUBLIC ORDER IN ALMOST ALL PLACES. VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND OTHER FORMS OF DISORDER HAVE BEEN KEPT TO A MINIMUM. PART OF THE CREDIT, UNDOUBTEDLY, GOES TO THE CONTESTANTS, WHO HAVE GENERALLY ACCEPTED, AND ABIDED BY, THE ELECTION RULES. SPECIAL GRIEVANCE BOARDS, SET UP IN ALL JURISDICTIONS, HAVE NOT RESOLVED EVERY COMPLAINT, BUT HAVE SERVED AT LEAST, AS A BENIGN WAY OF LETTING OF STEAM, AND THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF REAL COMMUNICATION, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, AMONTH THE CONTESTANTS AND THE GOVERNMENT IN THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

4. WHILE THE INTELLECTUAL CONTENT OF MANY OF THE ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CAMPAIGN WAS NOT IMPRESSIVE, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RELATIVE FREEDOM OF CAMPAIGNERS TO TALK ABOUT MANY ISSUES WAS. CLEARLY, OPEN ATTACKS ON SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WAS TABOO (THOUGH MANY NOT-SO-SUBTLE PUBLIC SWIPES AT PEOPLE LIKE INTERIOR MINISTER AMIRMACHMUD AND INFORMATION MINISTER MASHURI HAVE, SO FAR AT LEAST, GONE UNPUNISHED), AS WAS CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE BASIC PRINCIPALS OF THE NEW ORDER AND THE THRUST OF ITS POLICIES. POINTED AND RATHER DETAILED SPEECHES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES WAS PERMITTED, HOWEVER, AND DID OCCUR. THE VERY FRANK DISCUSSIONS OF SK 028, THE REGULATION COVERING CAMPUS POLITICAL ACTIVITY, AND THE CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT EDUCATION POLICY BY THE BANDUNG-BASED ANTI-IGNORANCE MOVEMENT ARE CASES IN POINT.

5. JAKARTA'S NEWSPAPERS, REPRESENTING THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF PERMISSIBLE POLITICAL VIEWPOINT, HAD A FIELD DAY DURING THE CAMPAIGN. WHILE THEIR REPORTING WAS OCCASIONALLY IRRESPONSIBLE, INDEED INCENDIARY, THE OPENNESS WITH WHICH THEY ATTACKED THEIR POLITICAL

OPPONENTS - BE THEY PPP, PDI OR GOLKAR - WAS REFRESHING. THE PRO-PPP DAILY PELITA AND THE ALWAYS OBSTREPOROUS MERDEKA DID RECEIVE OFFICIAL WARNINGS ABOUT SEVERAL OF THEIR STORIES (AND THERE ARE RUMORS THAT AFTER THE ELECTION PELITA COULD LOSE ITS LICENSE), BUT NEITHER PAPER VISIBLY PULLED ITS PUNCHES AFTER THE WARNINGS. THE NEWSPAPERS' PERFORMANCE STENGTHENED THE INCREASINGLY WIDELY HELD VIEW THAT THE INDONESIAN PRESS MAY BE SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FREEST.

6. THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENTS (INCLUDING THE MOST DEPLORABLE VIOULENCE) DURING THE CAMPAIGN OCCURED IN EAST JAVA AND ACEH PROVINCES, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT IN WEST JAVA AND BALI. PPP, AS THE STRONGEST OPPOSITION ELEMENT, BORE THE BRUNT OF THE GOLKAR ATTACKS IN THESE AREAS, AND THE PPP CAMPAIGN WAS UNDOUBTEDLY DAMAGED BY THE HEAVY HANDED GOVERNMENT/GOLKAR TACTICS. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MILITARY COMMANDER OF EAST JAVA, FOR EXAMPLE, PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE ARREST OF SOME 350 MOSLEMS (IN CONNECTION WITH THE KOMANDO JIHAD ROUND-UP IN EAST JAVA), MANY OF WHOM WERE INVOLVED IN THE PPP CAMPAIGN, WHILE PPPSPOKESMEN RECENTLY CLAIMED THAT MORE THAN 700 OF THEIR MEMBERS ARE STILL IN JAIL. COMMENT: SENIOR MOSLEM LEADERS, IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS, HAVE NOT SUPPORTED THIS CLAIM. FORMER PRIME MINISTER MOHAMAD NATSIR TOLD US MOST OF THOSE ARRESTED IN CENTRAL AND EAST JAVA HAVE BEEN RELEASED, AND IMRON ROSJADI, WHO HEADS THE PPP LIST IN WEST JAVA, SAID THOSE DETAINED IN THE PROVINCE WERE HELD ONLY TWO OR THREE DAYS.

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O R 191050Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 754
INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN
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7. PDI, WHICH CONSTITUTES FAR LESS OF A THREAT TO GOLKAR AT THE POLLS, SUFFERED LESS THAN PPP. IN ONLY A FEW AREAS, CENTRAL JAVA, SOUTH SULAWESI, MALUKU AND BALI PROVINCES - HAVE THEY CLAIMED SERIOUS HARRASSMENT AT THE HANDS OF LOCAL SECURITY OFFICIALS. THEIR CAMPAIGN PROBLEMS IN MANY INSTANCES SEEM TO STEM MORE FROM THEIR OWN INTERNAL DISSENSION THAN FROM GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE. IN THE LAST DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION, HOWEVER, PDI OFFICIALS HAVE PUBLICLY CLAIMED THAT A NUMBER OF THEIR MEMBERS HAVE BEEN MURDERED BY GOLKAR FANATICS, AND ONE YOUNG PDI LEADER TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT 28 PDI MEMBERS HAD IN FACT BEEN MURDERED IN THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN. COMMENT: THERE IS NO INDEPDEPENDENT CORROBORATION OF ELECTION-RELATED MURDERS (THOUGH THE JAKARTA PRESS, IN OCCASIONAL STORIES OF INDIVIDUAL HOMOCIDES, HAS SUBTLY IMPLIED THEIR CONNECTION TO THE ELECTION), THE PDI HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY RAISED THIS ISSUE.
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8. MUCH OF THE CAMPAIGN'S TENSION AND SPORADIC VIOLENCE AROSE OUT OF THE BLATANT MISUSE OF RELIGION AS A CAMPAIGN ISSUE BY BOTH GOLKAR AND THE PPP. THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE FIRST ACHIEVED PROMINENCE WHEN THE GOVERNMENT "BROKE" THE KOMANDO JAHAD CASE AND USED THE SPECTER OF A REVOLUTIONARY MOSLEM STATE MOVEMENT TO ARREST HUNDREDS OF MOSLEM (AND, NOT COINCIDENTALLY, PPP) ACTIVISTS ON JAVA AND SUMATRA. PPP, FAR FROM BEING COWED, RESPONDED BY ESCALATING THE RANCOR OF THEIR ATTACKS ON GOLKAR, OPENLY SUGGESTING IN SOME AREAS THAT ANY MOSLEM WHO VOTED AGAINST THE KA'BAH (THE MOSLEM RELIGIOUS AND PPP POLITICAL SYMBOL) WOULD BE CONDEMNED TO HELL. THEREAFTER, INCREASINGLY EMOTIONAL DIATRIBES ON THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE CROWDED OUT DISCUSSION OF MORE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. (IT MUST BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE THE HEAT OF THE ARGUMENTS, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF VIOLENT COMMUNAL CLASHES GROWING OUT OF RELIGIOUS ISSUES.)

9. IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN, UNFORTUNATELY, AS THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE WAS FINALLY LOSING STEAM, AN EVEN MORE CONTENTIOUS ISSUE AROSE, REVOLVING AROUND THE RECENT GOVERNMENT DECISION TO DENY THE CONTESTANTS THE RIGHT TO SIGN ONE OF THE KEY ELECTION REPORTING FORMS, FORM CA-1. PPP AND PDI LEADERS, WHO HAVE BEEN BOUYED RECENTLY BY THEIR PERCEPTION OF A LATE SURGE OF POPULAR SUPPORT, IMMEDIATELY OPPOSED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION, CHARGING IT WAS A GOLKAR-INSPIRED ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE ELECTION VIA FALSIFIED CA-1 FORMS. (COMMENT: WHILE THE PARTISAN CHARGES OF PPP AND PDI MAY WELL BE EXAGGERATED, IT IS APPARENTLY TRUE THAT THE REPORTING FORMS FOR THE ELECTION WERE ALTERED LATE IN THE CAMPAIGN. ORIGINALLY PARTY-BY-PARTY RETURNS WERE TO BE RECORDED ON FORM CA (THE COVERING FOR CA-1), WHICH WILL BE SIGNED BY ALL THE CONTESTANTS. NOW THE PARTY BREAKDOWNS WILL APPEAR ONLY ON CA-1, WHICH WILL NOT BE SIGNED. GOLKAR LEADERS CORRECTLY POINT OUT THAT THE PARTIES WILL STILL HAVE WITNESSES TO VERIFY LOCAL

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VOTE COUNTS, WHO WILL BE ALLOWED TO MAKE THEIR OWN NOTES OF THE VOTE COUNT. NONETHELESS, THE GOVERNMENT DECISION, AT BEST, APPEARED TO BE EXCEEDINGLY ILL-TIMED).

10. THE CA-1 ISSUE HAS COMPLETELY DOMINATED POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN JAKARTA DURING THE PAST WEEK, WITH INCREASINGLY THREATENING (THOUGH VAGUE) STATEMENTS FROM PARTY LEADERS, BORDERING ON QUESTIONING THE LEGITIMACY OF THE WHOLE ELECTION PROCESS. THE ISSUE CAME TO A RATHER ANTI-CLIMACTIC HEAD ON APRIL 28, WHEN PRESIDENT SUHARTO YIELDED TO PPP AND PDI DEMANDS FOR A MEETING TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. WHILE THE PRESIDENT STOOD FIRM IN REFUSING TO RECONSIDER THE CA-1 DECISION (ON THE GROUNDS THAT NEW FORMS COULD NOT BE DISTRIBUTED IN TIME FOR THE ELECTION), HE DID "GUARANTEE" THE PARTIES THAT THE VOTING AND VOTE-COUNT WOULD BE HONEST AND PROMISED TO ORDER A RE-VOTE/ RECOUNT IN ANY AREAS IN WHICH THERE WERE CLEAR IRREGULARITIES. (COMMENT: IN THE SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT ALONE WILL DECIDE WHETHER SUCH IRREGULARITIES OCCURRED, SINCE THERE IS NOT PROCEDURE IN CURRENT ELECTORAL LAW FOR MAKING THAT DETERMINATION).

11. ALTHOUGH BOTH PPP AND PDI LEADERS AFTER MEETING THE PRESIDENT DECLARED THEMSELVES "NOT SATISFIED" WITH THE DECISION ON CA-1, THE IMMEDIATE TENSION APPEARS TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY DE-FUSED. SEVERAL SENIOR PPP LEADERS, THOUGH STILL WARY OF POSSIBLE GOLKAR CHEATING SEEMED RESIGNED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS TODAY TO DO THE BEST THEY CAN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. PPP, IN

FACT, HAS ISSUED A FORMAL STATEMENT, RE-APPEALING TO
ITS MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN "AND MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE
ELECTION." DESPITE THIS, THE CA-1 ISSUE - PROBABLY
UNNECESSARILY - HAS CLOUDED AN OTHERWISE REASONABLY
POSITIVE PERFORMANCE BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE
POLITICAL PARTIES DURING THE 1977 CAMPAIGN.
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Message Attributes

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